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BARRAGA: NEWS FROM THE 11TH DISTRICT

The Electricity Rip-Off of Long Island Ratepayers

By: Suffolk County Legislator Tom Barraga

A recent electric bill was received by a homeowner from PSEG Long Island covering a sixty-two day period, from May 25th 2016 to July 27th 2016, for \$742.00. This homeowner has a 2,000 square foot single story home with three bedrooms, a kitchen, living room, dining room, den and a two car garage. Nothing elaborate, just a ranch home in a middle-income area. Just think of it, \$742.00 for sixty-two days of electricity-- outrageous. It is no wonder that there is a flight of young and older residents to other states when Suffolk County, according to one survey, is the second most expensive place to live in the Country. A total of \$261.00 of the bill is for the so-called "power supply charge" portion of the electric bill, a charge incurred before the consumer actually uses one kilowatt of power in their home. The remaining charge of \$410.00 is for actual kilowatt usage in the dwelling plus \$71.00 in so-called other charges and taxes. The \$742.00 charge is masked by the utility company by only charging the ratepayers in this case for the monthly plan charge of \$159.00, but including in small print on an attached billing sheet that there will be, in this instance, a \$30.00 per month increase in the ratepayer's monthly plan to cover additional, current and future rate increases. As one constituent of mine recently said, "What the hell is going on with these huge electric bills- they're killing me." How and why have we reached a point on Long Island where a family with a three bedroom ranch gets an electric bill for a two month period totaling approximately \$750.00?

Whether we approach the Public Service Commission (PSC), Long Island Power Authority (LIPA), PSEG Long Island, the State or Federal Governments nothing seems to work. These agencies, utility companies and governments seem to be totally ineffective in giving Suffolk County Ratepayers any real financial relief. Ineptness and incompetence seem to be the order of the day, with the ratepayers of Long Island being ripped off in the past, the present and the future.